

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #41

**SEINE FISHERIES:** An aerial survey of the Northern, Unakwik, Coghill, Northwestern and Eshamy districts was flown on Tuesday. An aerial survey of the Eastern and Southeastern districts was flown on Wednesday. Escapement observations for both the Eastern and Southeastern districts have improved significantly since last week's flights, and warrant the commencement of commercial fisheries targeting wild pink and chum salmon in these districts.

At this time, VFDA has recommended standing down in Port Valdez to allow for the accumulation of pink salmon needed for broodstock. VFDA estimates at least 300,000 pink salmon secured for broodstock near the Solomon Gulch Hatchery. VFDA's broodstock needs are approximately 346,000 pink salmon. PWSAC began its pink salmon cost recovery program at AFK, CCH, and WNH on Thursday, July 26, and reports a small buildup of fish in the hatchery SHAs. Future CPF openings targeting PWSAC enhanced pink salmon will be determined by cost recovery fishing progress and run entry. ADF&G test fishing in the Southwestern District began on July 23, gauging pink salmon run entry and stock composition. The maximum set size per sample location has increased to approximately 350 – 500 pink salmon. Stock contribution estimates from Thursday, July 26 were 78% hatchery stock origin (SGH= 4%, CCH= 13%, WNH= 43%, and AFK hatchery = 18%) and 22% wild stock origin. Samples of pink salmon caught on July 26 resulted in an estimated 32% female, with a total sample size of 96 fish.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** Waters of the Esther Subdistrict excluding the WNH THA and SHA, will be open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET AND PURSE SEINE harvest for a 14-hour period starting at 6:00 am on Saturday, July 28. PWSAC reports continued chum salmon run entry to WNH and has recommended this opening.

**Waters of the Granite Bay Subdistrict will be open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET AND PURSE SEINE harvest for a 14-hour period starting at 6:00 am on Saturday, July 28.**

**Waters of the Coghill District within College Fiord, north of a latitude line at 61°00.45'N (Pt. Pakenham), will open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET AND PURSE SEINE harvest for a 60-hour period starting at 6:00 a.m. Saturday, July 28.** Effective from 6:00 a.m., Saturday, July 28 to 6:00 p.m., July 30, regulatory closed waters pertaining to the Coghill River, as specified in 5 AAC 24.350(6)(B)), will not be in effect. Commercial fishing will not be permitted within the bed or channel of the Coghill River at any stage of the tide.

A total of 1,617 sockeye salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir yesterday, and approximately 700 sockeye salmon were observed below the weir this morning. Cumulative passage is 70,718 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 18,688 sockeye salmon for this date. A total of 5,206 pink salmon were passed at the Coghill River weir yesterday, and approximately 2,000 pink salmon were observed below the weir this morning. The commercial harvest estimate from the 14-hour period on Wednesday, July 25 is 9,602 chum, 479 sockeye, and 58,100 pink salmon with 35 deliveries reported. Cumulative Coghill District CPF harvest estimates to date are 2.4 million chum, 420,300 sockeye, and 362,900 pink salmon. PWSAC reports completing their chum salmon eggtake at WNH on Wednesday, July 25.

**EASTERN DISTRICT:** Waters of the Eastern District south of the latitude of Rocky Point will open to commercial fishing for 14 hours on Saturday, July 28 beginning at 6:00 am. Waters of Sheep Bay north of the newly defined regulatory closed waters boundary from 60° 41.99' N. lat., 145° 56.11' W. long. to 60° 41.17' N. lat., 145° 55.87' W. long. will be closed to fishing until further notice. Waters of the Eastern District east of 145° 57.12' W. longitude, including waters of Simpson Bay, The Narrows and Nelson Bay, will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. It is anticipated that fishery openings targeting wild pink and chum salmon in the Eastern District will be limited in frequency, with time and area for subsequent openings being dependent upon escapement, harvest and effort.

**All regulatory closed waters in the Eastern District as described in 5AAC 24.350(3) will be in effect until further notice. All anadromous stream closures in the Eastern District will be in effect until further notice.** Please refer to the ADF&G 2012-2015 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound booklet for regulations regarding commercial salmon fisheries in the Prince William Sound Area. This booklet is available in the Cordova ADF&G office and at the following web address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/PWSSalmon-2012-2015.pdf>

**Please refer to Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #28 from July 16 which closed waters in the vicinity of select stream and river mouths to provide protection of salmon escapement.** Under the authority of 5 AAC 39.290 Closed Waters (c), a list of Latitude/Longitude points has been implemented around which waters within a 500 yards radius are closed to commercial fishing. This list of Latitude/Longitude points were in effect starting 8:00 am, Thursday, July 19 and will remain effective through the remainder of the 2012 commercial salmon fishing season. Closed areas defined by existing markers remain in effect. Electronic copies of the list and associated map detailing these updated regulatory closed waters are available at the following web address under the *Prince William Sound Anadromous Waters Closures* heading:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.salmon#/maps>

Copies of the list and map are also available in the Cordova ADFG office. In the past a system of markers was used to identify closed areas. Maintenance of that marker program ended in 2003 because of lack of funding. Since that time, some markers have fallen or otherwise disappeared or are obscured from view by vegetation. The closures associated with this list of Lat/Long coordinates are implemented to supplement the marker program closures and clearly identify enforceable closed areas that protect salmon escapement. Streams were selected that had markers in the past or are part of aerial survey escapement monitoring. The selection of these streams ensures protection of the primary salmon producing systems in Prince William Sound. The Anadromous Waters Catalog is the source of the Lat/Long coordinates in the list. The datum for these regulatory coordinates is NAD 1983.

**SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for 14 hours on Saturday, July 28 beginning at 6:00 am. All regulatory closed waters in the Southeastern District as described in 5AAC 24.350(11) will be in effect until further notice. All anadromous stream closures in the Southeastern District will be in effect until further notice.** It is anticipated that fishery openings targeting wild pink and chum salmon in the Southeastern District will be limited in frequency, with time and area for subsequent openings being dependent upon escapement, harvest and effort.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing** (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)). Fish tickets have a “not sold/personal use” field to report these salmon.

**The next scheduled PURSE SEINE salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 28. The next scheduled GILLNET salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, July 28.** Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or  
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing.

However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.